



Office of Specialized Instruction

# Programs & Resources Guide for Families



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2014–2015



# Letter from the Chief

Dear DCPS Families,

We are pleased to present you with the *2014–2015 Programs and Resources Guide for Families*. This guide has been prepared to provide you—our families—with key information about the programs that we offer to students with disabilities throughout the District.

Our vision is to become the school district of choice for students with disabilities. We seek to serve this community through robust programming, quality staff and parent engagement. As we continue to improve and grow our special education services, we’re also striving to keep families updated and engaged in the process.

We would love to hear from you. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to the Office of Specialized Instruction team members with questions. Contact information for each of our programs and supports is included at the back of this guide.

We look forward to working with you to provide our students with disabilities a high-quality education!

Sincerely,



Dr. Nathaniel Beers  
Chief, Office of Specialized Instruction

# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Special Education Programs.....	5
Behavior & Education Support (BES) Program.....	5
Communication & Education Support (CES) Program.....	6
Early Learning Support (ELS) Program.....	7
Independence & Learning Support (ILS) Program.....	8
Medical & Education Support (MES) Program.....	9
Sensory Support Programs.....	10
Specific Learning Support (SLS) Program.....	11
Special Education Resources.....	12
Assistive Technology (AT).....	12
Early Childhood Inclusion Classrooms.....	13
Early Stages.....	14
Extended School Year (ESY).....	15
Home and Hospital Instruction Program (HIP).....	16
Inclusion Models.....	17
Related Services.....	19
Section 504 Program.....	20
Transition Programs.....	21
Transportation.....	22
Academic Interventions & Programs.....	23

# Introduction

One of the goals of the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is to be the district of choice for students with disabilities. We believe that all students, regardless of background or circumstance, can achieve at the highest levels.

Parents, families and community members play an essential role in the education of their children, especially when a child has a disability and needs special services. You are an expert on your child and his or her most important advocate. This guide is meant to give you a brief overview of the programs and services we offer to our students with disabilities. We look forward to working together to ensure that all of our students receive a high-quality education.

## What is special education?

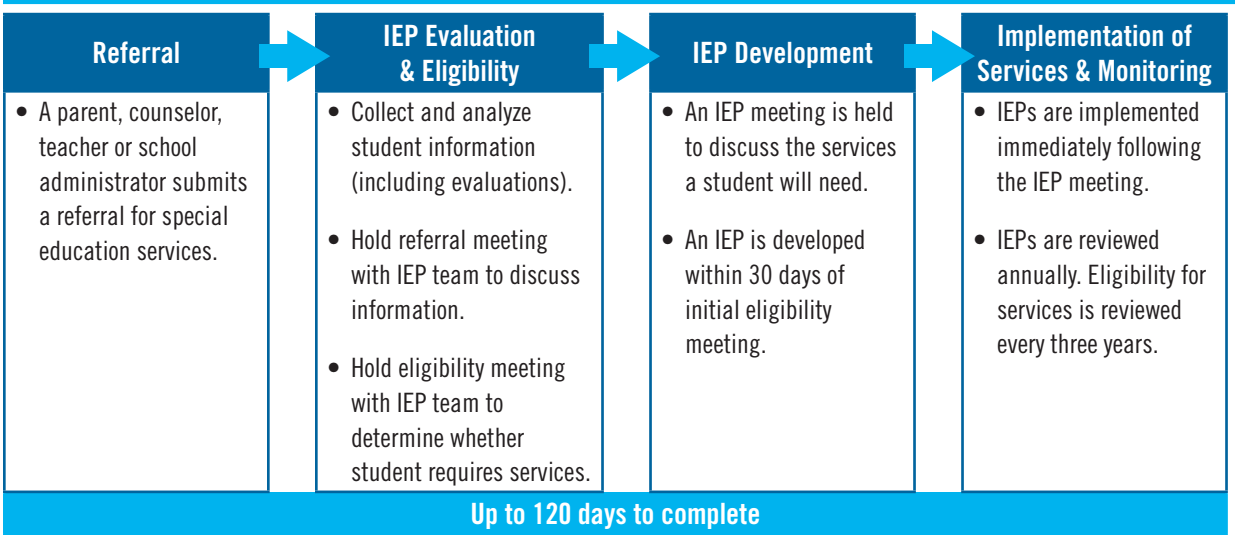
According to the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004**, special education is the specially designed instruction and related services required to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Under this important federal law, DCPS must provide a **free appropriate public education (FAPE)** to every student. IDEA also mandates that students learn in the **least restrictive environment (LRE)** possible. This means that children with disabilities are taught alongside their nondisabled peers to the greatest extent possible and are removed from these settings only when the nature of their disability prevents them from learning with their nondisabled peers.

## Why would my child need special education services?

When students have the opportunity to be involved and make progress in the same curriculum as their nondisabled peers, we say they have **access** to the curriculum. However, sometimes a student's disability can prevent him or her from accessing the curriculum. When this happens, teaching methods, materials, classroom settings and/or assignments must be modified to meet the student's needs. These modifications and accommodations give students the opportunity to access their education.



## What is the special education process?



The special education process starts once a teacher, parent, psychologist, other school staff member or third party (such as a day care center or physician) submits a referral for a student. After the referral is reviewed, a team meets to discuss the referral, collect (or recommend more) evaluations and determine whether the student is eligible for special education services. This team is called the **IEP (individualized education program) team** and should include general education teachers, special education teachers, school administrators, other key members of the school, related service providers, the student (if appropriate) and you. As the guardian of your child, you are a very important member of the IEP team.

Once a student with a disability is found eligible for special education services, the IEP team discusses a plan of action and creates an IEP for the student. The IEP is a document that outlines the educational needs of the student and the instruction and services required to meet those needs. The IEP team determines the special education services a student needs and the appropriate setting in which these services should be delivered.

DCPS makes every effort to provide special education services in each student's attending or neighborhood school if the appropriate services are available. When this is not possible, the Office of Specialized Instruction (OSI) assigns a student to a districtwide classroom at another school that has space, is as close as possible to the student's home and can provide the student's IEP services.

## Where are these services provided?

DCPS provides a continuum of services for students ages three through 22 with disabilities who have been found eligible to receive special education services. There are different settings along the continuum where these services can be provided, and students learn in the least restrictive environment.

IEP teams determine the appropriate level of services a student needs to access the curriculum. Most DCPS students can be served in the general education (regular) classroom, in a Learning Lab or in a full-time classroom. Separate school and home and hospital instruction are considered the most restrictive environments and are for students with the highest level of need.





“Inside of general education” means that the specialized instruction and related services for students with disabilities will be served while they are with their nondisabled peers in the general classroom. DCPS believes that all students will benefit from including students with disabilities in a general education setting to the greatest extent possible.

Sometimes, though, a student needs more support than can be provided in the general education setting. “Outside of general education” refers to all specialized instruction and services that are provided to a class or grouping made up entirely of students with disabilities. Students with less than 20 hours of specialized instruction outside of general education in their IEPs typically receive services in a Learning Lab, also referred to as a resource room or pull-out services.

DCPS’s full-time, districtwide classrooms provide specialized supports to students with 20 or more hours of specialized instruction outside of general education in their IEP. Our full-time classrooms are designed to give more support to students with disabilities who have a high level of need.

Students’ IEPs may have instruction hours provided only inside of general education, only outside of general education, or both inside and outside of general education.

### How does inclusion work in DCPS?

Students with disabilities spend as much time with their nondisabled peers as possible (as decided by the IEP team). Our goal is to help all students develop the skills they need to eventually learn in a general education classroom with their nondisabled peers. It is important to note that inclusion is not a type of classroom or a place but rather the philosophy of including students with disabilities in general education settings. The goal of inclusion is to provide students with high-quality instruction that is aligned to grade-level expectations and gives them the opportunity to succeed in all areas. One important way inclusion happens is when a student’s special education needs are met in the general education classroom.



# Special Education Programs

## Behavior & Education Support (BES) Program

**Serving:** Students with emotional disabilities and students with other disabilities who require intensive behavioral supports  
**Grades:** Grade 1 through grade 12  
**Contact:** [osi.behavior@dc.gov](mailto:osi.behavior@dc.gov)

BES program classrooms are full-time classrooms for students who have been identified with an emotional disability or who have challenging behaviors that interfere with learning. Each classroom provides a safe and structured learning environment supported by trained staff who focus on individual student goals.

### Eligibility

The BES program serves students in 1st through 12th grades who have severe behaviors and have not responded to interventions in the general education setting. Students can enroll in these classrooms only if the IEP team believes the full-time BES program services are necessary.

Students in BES program classrooms spend most of their time in the full-time classroom; however, students can begin to transition to a general education setting if the IEP team determines that they are ready.

### Instructional Model

BES program classrooms are highly structured and supportive settings. The curriculum aligns to the Common Core State Standards, as well as the DCPS Scope and Sequence. Reading programs such as System 44, Read 180 and Reading Wonders as well as other programs at the school are available to BES students. A blended instructional model is used in some middle and high school BES programs. Blended instruction includes online and in-class instruction, which allows students to pace their own learning and earn course credits for graduation.

### Classroom Support

Every BES program has three trained staff members: a certified special education teacher, an instructional paraprofessional and a behavior technician. Staff members in every class are trained in Safety Care (behavior management program), de-escalation techniques and reading interventions. The BES coaches also visit classrooms regularly to provide individualized training and support to classroom staff. Specially trained and certified related service providers support the physical and emotional needs of students in accordance with their IEP.



# Communication & Education Support (CES) Program

*Formerly known as the Autism Support Program*

**Serving:** Students with autism spectrum and related disorders  
**Grades:** PK3 through grade 12  
**Contact:** [osi.autism@dc.gov](mailto:osi.autism@dc.gov)

CES program classrooms are full-time classrooms for students who have been identified with autism spectrum disorder or other learning needs. The CES program is based on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and uses research-based practices to provide students with highly structured classrooms. Teachers and staff in these full-time classrooms support the academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs of students to help them develop independent life skills.

High-functioning CES classes serve students whose academic performance is at or above grade level but who need additional support in social skills, behavior management and executive functioning.

## Eligibility

CES programs serve students in PK3 through 12th grade who have an autism spectrum disorder and/or require support in the following areas: communication, social-emotional, adaptive behavior and academics. Students can enroll in these classrooms only if the IEP team decides that they need full-time CES program services. Students in CES program classrooms typically spend most of their time in the full-time classroom; however, students can begin to transition to a general education setting if the IEP team determines that they are ready.

## Instructional Model

CES classrooms are highly structured and supportive. The staff uses ABA techniques such as prompting and fading and reinforcement to provide the best quality instruction and behavior intervention. Reading and math programs include Edmark, Failure Free Reading and STAR Autism. The academic curriculum aligns to the Common Core State Standards and the DCPS Scope and Sequence.

## Classroom Support

Each CES classroom is staffed with a certified special education teacher and instructional paraprofessionals who are trained in ABA. Specially trained and certified related service providers support the physical and emotional needs of students in accordance with their IEP. The CES coaches provide individualized training and support to classroom staff. CES coaches are experts in the field of ABA research and several are board-certified behavior analysts.

# Early Learning Support (ELS) Program

**Serving:** Students with developmental delays  
**Grades:** PK3 through grade 2  
**Contact:** [osi.sls@dc.gov](mailto:osi.sls@dc.gov)

The ELS program offers full-time, early intervention for students. Each classroom uses research-based interventions and structured lessons to prepare students for a less restrictive environment.

## Eligibility

The ELS program serves students in PK3 through 2nd grade who have a developmental delay or other delays in cognition, communication, social/emotional, and/or motor and adaptive skills. Students with autism typically are not served in these classrooms. Many students in this program are identified through Early Stages. IEP teams decide whether a student needs the full-time ELS support.

## Instructional Model

ELS classrooms are highly structured and supportive. The academic curriculum aligns to the Common Core State Standards and the DCPS Scope and Sequence. The ELS program partners with Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes to improve reading, spelling, comprehension and critical thinking. The ELS program also uses Handwriting Without Tears and STAR Autism. Teachers use a center-based model that focuses on individual and small-group learning.

## Classroom Support

Every ELS program is staffed with a certified special education teacher and an instructional paraprofessional. Specially trained and certified related service providers support the physical and emotional needs of students in accordance with their IEP. The ELS coaches provide individualized training and support to classroom staff.





# Independence & Learning Support (ILS) Program

*Formerly known as the Intellectual Disability Program*

**Serving:** Students with intellectual disabilities and adaptive functioning challenges  
**Grades:** PK3 through grade 12  
**Contact:** [osi.lowincidence@dc.gov](mailto:osi.lowincidence@dc.gov)

ILS program classrooms are full-time classrooms for students who have been identified as having a cognitive or intellectual disability. Each program teaches literacy and life skills to prepare students for employment and long-term independence. Community business partnerships and transition planning are key pieces of the ILS program.

## Eligibility

ILS programs serve students with delays in measured intelligence and in adaptive and academic functioning or students who have an intellectual disability. Students can enroll in these classrooms only if the IEP team determines the need for full-time ILS program services. Students with the highest level of need may be candidates for ILS classrooms in a separate, specialized school.

## Instructional Model

ILS programs are highly structured and supportive. Academic instruction is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and the DCPS Scope and Sequence, with a special focus on daily living activities that promote independence. Reading programs such as Edmark, Failure Free Reading and Handwriting Without Tears are used in the ILS programs.

High school students in the full-time ILS program work toward a certificate of IEP completion rather than a high school diploma. They have access to transition services such as career education and vocational trainings. Many students, but not all, in the ILS program take the alternate state standardized assessment.

## Classroom Support

ILS programs are staffed with certified special education teachers and instructional paraprofessionals. Staff members receive training and support in the areas of effective instruction, specific reading interventions, behavior management and data collection. Specially trained and certified related service providers support the physical and emotional needs of students in accordance with their IEP. The ILS coaches provide individualized training and support to classroom staff.

# Medical & Education Support (MES) Program

**Serving:** Students with complex medical needs  
**Grades:** PK3 through grade 12  
**Contact:** [osi.mes@dc.gov](mailto:osi.mes@dc.gov)

MES program classrooms are full-time classrooms for students who have been identified with complex medical needs and intellectual or cognitive delays. Each classroom provides a safe and structured learning environment with an emphasis on sensory experiences and related service integration.

## Eligibility

The MES program serves students in PK3 through 12th grade who are diagnosed with chronic and complex medical conditions and cognitive delays. Students in this program typically experience functional limitations and high health care use. While these students typically spend most of their time in the MES classroom, they may spend a part of their day with their nondisabled peers. Students with the highest level of need may be candidates for MES classrooms in a separate, specialized school.

## Instructional Model

Classrooms in the MES program are designed to create a space for individual student learning. Instruction is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, the DCPS Scope and Sequence, and individual student IEP goals. Students engage in literacy and numeracy instruction, sensory exploration, and specialized art and music.

## Classroom Support

Every MES class is staffed with a certified special education teacher and a paraprofessional who are trained to meet the unique needs of students. A nurse is also dedicated to the needs of students. Specially trained and certified related service providers support students in accordance with their IEP.





# Sensory Support Programs

**Serving:** Students with hearing or visual impairment  
**Grades:** PK3 through grade 12  
**Contact:** [osi.lowincidence@dc.gov](mailto:osi.lowincidence@dc.gov)

The Sensory Support programs serve students who are deaf/hard of hearing or who are blind/visually impaired. These programs aim to help students develop the skills they need to learn successfully alongside their nondisabled peers and to live independently.

## Eligibility

Students in the Sensory Support programs have a diagnosis that includes a sensory impairment or require communication and sensory support to access their school environment. Typically, students in these programs have average to above average cognitive abilities. However, some schools have classrooms created to serve students with sensory impairments and intellectual or cognitive delays.

## Instructional Model

Academic instruction in the Sensory Support programs is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and the DCPS Scope and Sequence. Classroom staff provides instruction in American Sign Language and other services to students who are deaf/hard of hearing. For students who have visual impairments, teachers provide braille instruction as well as orientation and mobility training that helps students navigate their school and community. Sensory Support classrooms also help students develop communication and daily living skills that provide them the opportunity to succeed inside and outside the classroom.

Students typically spend most of their school day in the general education setting and receive state-of-the-art technological support (such as assistive listening devices) or other support to help them access the curriculum. The Sensory Support programs also offer auditory/verbal-oral training, support for residual hearing, cochlear implant support and sound amplification.

## Classroom Support

Each classroom for students who are deaf/hard of hearing is staffed with a teacher of the deaf, and each vision classroom is staffed with a teacher of the visually impaired. Sensory Support classrooms also have instructional paraprofessionals who provide additional support. Specially trained and certified related service providers support students in accordance with their IEP.

# Specific Learning Support (SLS) Program

*Formerly known as the Specific Learning Disability Program*

**Serving:** Students with learning disabilities or challenges  
**Grades:** Grade 3 through grade 12  
**Contact:** [osi.sls@dc.gov](mailto:osi.sls@dc.gov)

The SLS program is for students who have been identified with a specific learning disability or cognitive impairment. Each classroom provides a safe and structured learning environment with an emphasis on individualized instruction.

## Eligibility

The SLS program serves students in 3rd through 12th grades who are identified as having a specific learning disability or complex learning needs and have not responded to interventions in the general education setting. While these students typically spend most of their time in the SLS classroom, they can begin to transition to a general education setting when the IEP team determine that they are ready.

## Instructional Model

Classrooms in the SLS program are designed to create a space for individual student learning. Instruction is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, the DCPS Scope and Sequence, and students' IEP goals. Students benefit from reading and math programs such as SpellRead, System 44, Equals Math and Read 180, as well as other interventions available at the school.

Secondary students have access to the blended instruction model, which combines online and in-class instruction. Blended instruction offers students the chance to pace their own learning. Online courses are aligned to DC graduation standards so students have the opportunity to earn credits toward graduation as well.

## Classroom Support

Every SLS class is staffed with a certified special education teacher and a paraprofessional who are trained to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities and complex learning styles. Specially trained and certified related service providers support the physical and emotional needs of students in accordance with their IEP. The SLS coaches provide individualized training and support to classroom staff.



# Special Education Resources

## Assistive Technology (AT)

**Serving:** All students with disabilities who have AT outlined in their IEP  
**Grades:** PK3 through grade 12  
**Contact:** [osi.at@dc.gov](mailto:osi.at@dc.gov)

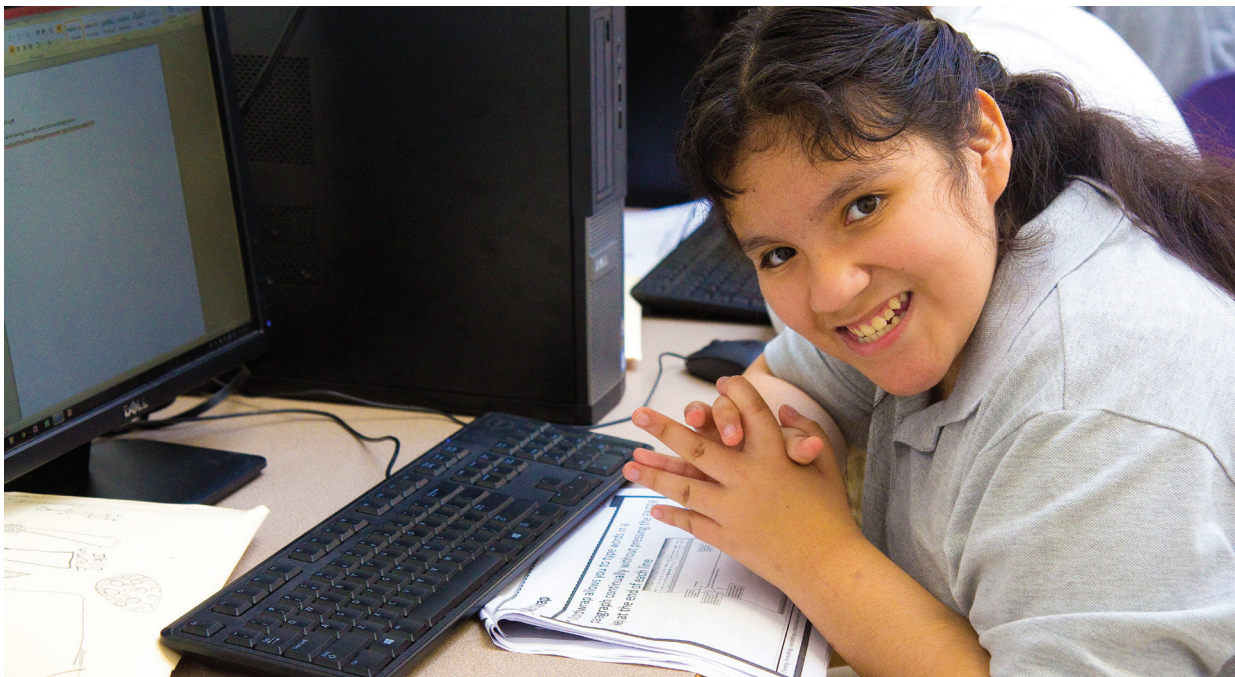
AT is a general term for all technologies that help a student with a disability access the school curriculum or setting. AT devices and services are provided to students who require them to access the curriculum, determined by the IEP team. AT comes in all shapes and sizes and may range from low-tech solutions, like pencil grips and slant boards, to high-tech devices, like laptops and software.

### Categories of AT

There are three categories of AT: AT for access, AT for communication and AT for learning. *AT for access* supports students with physical and sensory needs. Examples of AT for access include mobility and seating solutions, adaptive switches, and screen magnifiers. *AT for communication*, also known as augmentative and alternative communication, helps students communicate with one another and participate in classes. Examples of AT for communication include communication applications and software, as well as devices with picture symbols. *AT for learning* aids students with additional learning needs. Examples of AT for learning include personal computers, audio books, and speech-to-text or text-to-speech software.

### Access to AT

The IEP or 504 teams determine whether a student needs an AT device or AT services at his or her IEP or 504 meeting.



## Early Childhood Inclusion Classrooms

**Serving:** Students with disabilities served in the general education setting  
**Grades:** PK3–PK4  
**Contact:** [osi.earlychildhood@dc.gov](mailto:osi.earlychildhood@dc.gov)

At the early childhood level, DCPS serves many students with disabilities in the general education classroom. These general education classrooms use a number of research-based curricula including Tools of the Mind, Creative Curriculum, Montessori and the Reggio Emilia approach. Teachers are provided with supports and resources to meet the needs of all children in the classroom. Some classes are designed to serve both students with disabilities and those without in the same space. These classes use the Tools of the Mind curriculum and have additional resources to support all children.

### Instructional Model

The Tools of the Mind curriculum allows teachers to work at each student’s individual level to help him or her prepare for kindergarten. Students in the classroom also have the advantage of more opportunities to develop social-emotional skills as they interact and learn with children who have different abilities than they do. At the PK3/PK4 level, students with disabilities benefit greatly from peer modeling. Their nondisabled peers also benefit as they provide support and coaching to their classmates. All students in this setting will be better problem solvers and more accepting of differences.

### Classroom Support

Early childhood Tools of the Mind inclusion classrooms are staffed with a teacher who is certified in both early childhood education and special education and two trained classroom instructional paraprofessionals. Students receive the services (all academic, personal and related services) outlined in their IEPs while in a general education classroom.





# Early Stages

**Serving:** Children ages 3 through 5  
**Grades:** PK3, PK4 and kindergarten  
**Contact:** [referral@earlystagesdc.org](mailto:referral@earlystagesdc.org) or [info@earlystagesdc.org](mailto:info@earlystagesdc.org)

According to IDEA, a school district must identify, locate and evaluate all 3- to 5-year-old children in the school district who may have a disability through a process known as Child Find. Early Stages works with children in DCPS; children in dependent charters, private or religious schools, or child care centers; and children who are not yet enrolled in school. In addition, Early Stages manages Part C Transition, the process that lets families know if their children who are receiving early intervention services will also be eligible for special education when they turn three.

Early Stages has two sites where it conducts evaluations:

- Walker-Jones Education Campus at 1125 New Jersey Avenue, NW; and
- Department of Employment Services at 4058 Minnesota Avenue, NE.

## Main Activities

Early Stages offers developmental screenings, manages referrals, conducts evaluations, holds eligibility meetings, helps develop IEPs and identifies locations for children to receive their services if they are found eligible. Each student referred for a full evaluation is assigned an evaluation team. This team is made up of a family care coordinator, who supports the family through the process, and an evaluation coordinator, who organizes the evaluations and the development of an IEP. Together with related service providers, this team assesses the child, provides parents with a better understanding of their child’s needs, and decides whether the child is eligible for special education and related services.

## Service Delivery

DCPS school-based staff delivers all services. Children who need specialized instruction are offered a seat either at their neighborhood school or through a lottery placement. If the neighborhood school is unavailable or does not have a program the child needs, then a seat will be offered at the closest school that can meet his or her needs. Children who need only related services are not usually offered a seat in a full-time classroom. Instead, they are offered services at their neighborhood school or the school closest to their child care center or private school.

## Outreach

The Early Stages team works with organizations in the District and manages the referral and evaluation processes for families. It also distributes informational materials, trains organizations to implement screening programs, and creates or attends community events. If you would like to sign up for the Early Stages quarterly newsletter or would like more information, please visit [www.earlystagesdc.org](http://www.earlystagesdc.org).

## Referral to Early Stages

Anyone can make a referral to Early Stages. Referrals can be made by phone: 202-698-8037; fax: 202-654-6079; e-mail: [referral@earlystagesdc.org](mailto:referral@earlystagesdc.org); online form: <http://earlystagesdc.org/for-professionals/referrals>; or in person at either site.

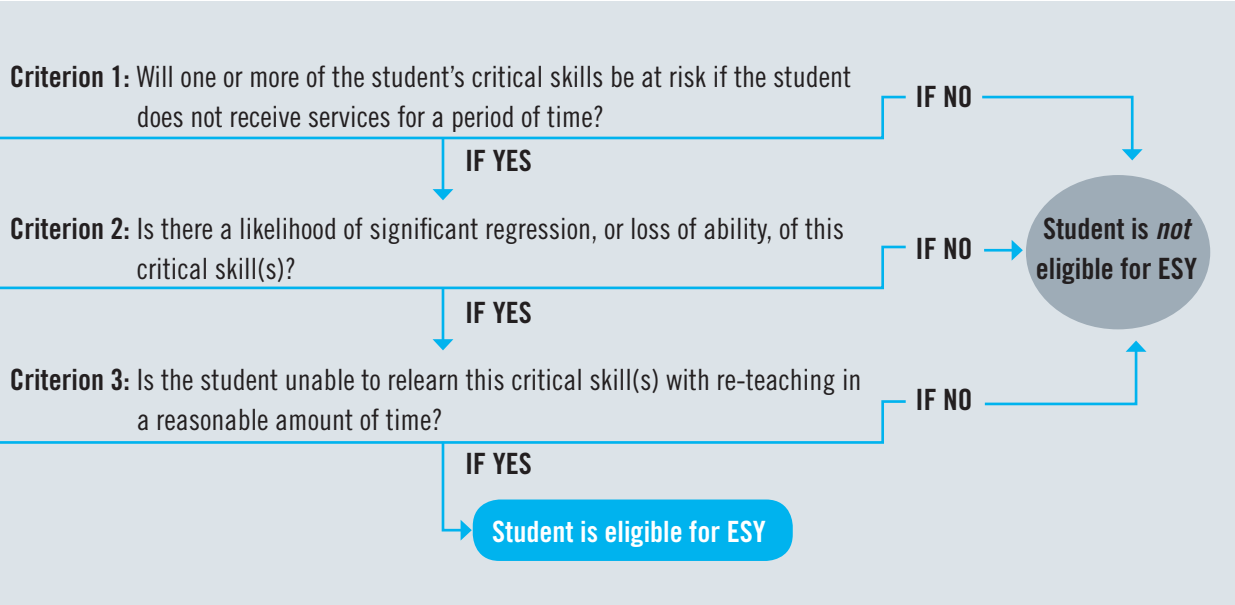
# Extended School Year (ESY)

**Serving:** All students with disabilities who have ESY outlined in their IEP  
**Grades:** PK3 through grade 12  
**Contact:** [osi.esy@dc.gov](mailto:osi.esy@dc.gov)

ESY refers to special education and/or related services provided to a student with a disability beyond the normal school year. DCPS offers a summer program to help students retain skills that are essential to their progress so they are ready to begin school in the fall. ESY summer sites are located at various schools each year.

## Eligibility

IEP teams consider a student’s eligibility for ESY each year. To be considered eligible for ESY, a student must meet the following three criteria:



Critical skills can be academic skills, such as reading or math, or nonacademic skills, such as social, behavioral or functional skills.

## Instructional Model

Instruction is aligned to the students’ critical skill needs and IEP goals as well as the Common Core State Standards. Research-based interventions such as Failure Free Reading, Edmark and Read 180 are also available during ESY.

## Classroom Support

ESY is staffed with certified special education teachers and paraprofessionals on an as-needed basis. Staff provides instruction to support the critical skills in each student’s IEP. Trained special education leadership staff members such as OSI coaches also work to support the summer program. Specially trained and certified related service providers support the physical and emotional needs of students in accordance with their IEP.

# Home and Hospital Instruction Program (HIP)

**Serving:** Students who are unable to attend school due to medical conditions

**Grades:** PK3 through grade 12

**Contact:** [hip.dcps@dc.gov](mailto:hip.dcps@dc.gov)

HIP serves students in PK3 through 12th grade who have medical or behavioral health conditions that keep them at home or a hospital and prevent them from attending school.

## Eligibility and Referral Process

To be eligible for HIP, students must:

- Be residents or wards of the District of Columbia;
- Be registered in a DCPS school, have an IEP at a DCPS local education agency charter school, or have an IEP at a nonpublic school being monitored by DCPS;
- Expect to miss at least two weeks of school or have a medical condition that causes them to miss many days of school over a long period of time; and
- Have a physician's verification signed by their treating physician or psychiatrist.

Referral for HIP must be initiated by the neighborhood school. The IEP team must determine that HIP services are needed for students with IEPs.

## Instructional Model

HIP offers a curriculum that incorporates the Common Core State Standards. Evidence-based curricula and interventions such as Edmark, Failure Free Reading and Equals Math are available to students. A HIP coordinator provides orientation support to students, collaborates with the local school teachers to ensure that students enroll in appropriate courses, monitors student progress, and provides feedback to teachers and parents.

- *Special Education:* HIP special education teachers provide instruction to both elementary and secondary students who need special education services. Instruction is individualized according to the goals and objectives outlined in the student's IEP. Secondary special education students who are on track to receive a diploma are also enrolled in DCPS online courses to satisfy graduation requirements.
- Specially trained and certified related service providers support the physical and emotional needs of students in accordance with their IEP or 504 Plan.

## Transition Back to School

HIP coordinators, instructors and medical staff work together with parents/guardians and the school to coordinate the return of the student to school-based instruction when HIP services are no longer required.

# Inclusion Models

## Co-Teaching

**Serving:** Students with specialized instruction outlined in their IEP designated as “inside of general education”

**Contact:** [osi.sit@dc.gov](mailto:osi.sit@dc.gov)

Co-teaching occurs when two or more adults share the responsibility for teaching some or all of the students in a classroom. This practice provides all students with an opportunity to learn from two educators in an integrated approach to the content. For students with IEPs, co-teaching may provide the least restrictive environment to receive specialized instruction.

## Instructional Model

There are many different models of co-teaching. Some models that DCPS supports include but are not limited to:

- *Lead and Support:* Teacher A is the primary planner, shares the plan and delivers the lesson; Teacher B supports instruction.
- *Station Teaching:* Teachers A and B divide students into instructional groups, and students rotate through different stations.
- *Alternative Teaching:* Teachers A and B plan together. Teacher A is responsible for instruction, and Teacher B is responsible for teaching certain skills when necessary. A larger group completes the planned lesson while a small group either completes an alternative lesson or the same lesson taught at a different level or for a different purpose.

The curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards as well as the DCPS Scope and Sequence. Instruction is also aligned to IEP goals and scaffolded to the appropriate level.

## Classroom Support

Co-teachers share instruction and are both actively engaged throughout instruction time. The certified teachers prepare together to develop lesson plans. Inclusion coaches work directly with schools to provide professional development and additional support to co-teachers.





# Learning Labs

Formerly known as Resource Rooms

**Serving:** Students with fewer than 20 hours of specialized instruction outlined in their IEP designated as “inside of general education”

**Contact:** [osi.sit@dc.gov](mailto:osi.sit@dc.gov)

A Learning Lab is a classroom that is separate from the general education classroom where students with disabilities are given direct, specialized instruction and academic assistance. Sometimes this form of support is also referred to as a resource room or pull-out services. Students in this setting spend part of their time in the Learning Lab and part of their time in the general education classroom with modifications and/or accommodations.

## Eligibility

DCPS students with fewer than 20 hours per week of specialized instruction inside of general education may receive some instruction in a Learning Lab. IEP teams decide whether the student requires instruction in a Learning Lab. Students with more than 20 hours of specialized instruction outside of general education in their IEP are eligible for a full-time program.

## Instructional Model

Learning Lab teachers provide whole-group, small-group and individual instruction and serve the accommodations and modifications included in students’ IEPs. All instruction is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and the DCPS Scope and Sequence. Targeted math and literacy interventions that are implemented in Learning Labs are Lexia, SpellRead, Equals Math, Just Words, Foundations, System 44/Read 180 and BURST.

## Classroom Support

Teachers in Learning Labs design all instruction to meet the specific needs of their students. The Learning Lab teacher works closely with the student’s general education teacher, other staff and the parents to ensure that the appropriate services are provided. The Learning Lab teacher aligns instruction to the IEP goals and is a part of the IEP team.

All Learning Labs receive regular support from the OSI inclusion coaches who provide individualized training and support such as:

- Classroom management strategies;
- Aligning instruction to the Common Core State Standards;
- Tracking student progress and using these data to adjust teaching methods; and
- Providing accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom.

Specially trained and certified related service providers support the physical and emotional needs of students in accordance with their IEPs.

# Related Services

**Serving:** All students with disabilities who have related services outlined in their IEP

**Grades:** PK3 through grade 12

**Contact:** [dcps.relatedservices@dc.gov](mailto:dcps.relatedservices@dc.gov)

## Mental Health and Behavioral Support Services

The Mental Health and Behavioral Support Services team consists of DCPS social workers who work with students on issues they face at school, at home, in the community and elsewhere that affect their ability to participate in and benefit from their education. These services can include group or individual counseling; home visits; and social, emotional and behavioral assessments. School social workers work with teachers to analyze student behavior and functioning over time to develop strategies that help maximize learning in the classroom. These social workers also connect students and families with community resources to maximize the impact of in-school behavioral support services. Social workers are part of the crisis response team, which supports students and school staff when a crisis occurs.

## Physical Supports: Occupational and Physical Therapy

Occupational therapists work with students and teachers to improve students’ ability to perform day-to-day tasks, such as reaching and grasping, so they can better hold books and classroom materials. Occupational therapy services also help address self-help skills, adaptive behavior and play, and other sensory and motor skills. Physical therapists help students with challenges related to movement, such as climbing stairs or transitioning from class to class. After diagnosing these challenges, physical therapists provide support and assistive technology, such as walkers, to help students travel around the school.

## Psychology

The psychology team supports students and educators by giving psychological and developmental tests, analyzing information about a child’s behavior and cognitive functioning, and interpreting these results with school staff and parents. DCPS psychologists work with parents, teachers and other IEP team members to ensure that test results and other information are used to determine the appropriate services and develop goals. School psychologists also help school staff and parents develop learning and behavior strategies.

## Speech-Language Pathology

The speech-language pathology team identifies and supports children with specific disorders and delays related to language and communication. The team provides therapy to help students overcome the impact of these challenges on their academic success. This therapy may include the use of technology to help students become more independent, such as devices that assist nonverbal students with communication. Speech-language pathologists also work closely with teachers and parents to build speech-language skills and help students apply those skills to all learning opportunities by reinforcing strategies in the classroom and at home.

# Section 504 Program

**Serving:** All students with disabilities with a 504 Plan  
**Grades:** PK3 through grade 12  
**Contact:** 504@dc.gov

The Section 504 program is named for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal law that requires public schools to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities so that these students can access the school's general education curriculum and learning opportunities.

Unlike special education, Section 504 does not prescribe specialized instruction for eligible students. Instead, the Section 504 program ensures that eligible students with disabilities get the reasonable accommodations or services they need to access the DCPS curriculum and learning opportunities.

## Eligibility

- A student is eligible under Section 504 if he or she has a (1) physical or mental impairment that (2) substantially limits (3) a major life activity. A student must meet all three criteria to be eligible.
- Eligibility determinations are made by the 504 team at your student's school.

## Process for Section 504

- Parents/guardians are invited to complete a Section 504 Referral Form if they believe that their child has a physical or mental impairment that could make their child eligible for Section 504. Referral forms are available at your student's school.
- Once the referral form has been received by the school, the 504 team will ask the parent/guardian to provide any medical documentation or additional information and invite the parent/guardian to attend a *504 eligibility meeting*. At the eligibility meeting, the team will review all available information and determine whether the student is eligible.
- If the student is determined to be eligible, the 504 team, which includes the parent/guardian, will then write a 504 Plan for the student, describing the specific accommodations or services that the student needs to access the general education curriculum at the school.
- The 504 team will meet annually to review the student's 504 Plan and determine whether any changes are needed. The 504 team will also review the student's eligibility for Section 504 every three years.

## For more information

You can read more about the law online at the U.S. Department of Education's website: [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html). You may also contact your school for informational brochures and referral forms.

Please note that charter, private and religious schools have separate programs to meet their obligations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If your student attends a charter, private or religious school, please contact that school directly for information.

# Transition Programs

## Project SEARCH

**Serving:** Students 18–21 years old pursuing a certificate of IEP completion  
**Contact:** [osi.transition@dc.gov](mailto:osi.transition@dc.gov)

Project SEARCH is a school-to-work transition program that takes place in an office setting where students learn real-life skills, receive job training and participate in employment readiness activities. The goal of the program is to help students with intellectual disabilities find employment in their field of interest. Project SEARCH is located at the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## Eligibility Guidelines

Students should:

- Be identified as having an intellectual or other developmental disability;
- Be 18–21 years old and receive special education services;
- Be on a certificate track (nondiploma) and have a good attendance record;
- Have a desire to work in the community during and at the end of the program and have a desire to work in an office setting;
- Have good hygiene skills, social skills and communication skills;
- Be able to follow instructions and abide by the code of conduct;
- Be able to use public transportation independently, including MetroAccess (travel training is available through the program); and
- Be able to pass a drug screening and criminal background check.

## Student Selection

Those interested in applying must contact a special education teacher at their school and be referred. Recommendations are made during the fall and winter of the school year, and students are selected in early spring. All accepted students must attend a two-week summer orientation. If you have any questions, please contact the transition team [osi.transition@dc.gov](mailto:osi.transition@dc.gov).



# Competitive Employment Opportunities (CEO) Program

**Serving:** Students 16–22 years old with disabilities pursuing a high school diploma  
**Contact:** [osi.transition@dc.gov](mailto:osi.transition@dc.gov) or <http://dcpsceo.com>

The CEO program provides high school age students with disabilities the chance to connect with professional mentors who work in a range of occupations. CEO mentors help guide students through the career exploration process. Students work with mentors, attend paid weekly professional development classes and complete career-focused projects. When students finish the program, mentors assist participants in applying for paid summer internships at their organizations.

Students are recommended to the program by school staff during the first semester of school. Selected students are then interviewed at their school near the end of the fall semester. Selections are made roughly three weeks after the interview process. Interested parents should contact program staff directly or speak to their student’s special education teacher.

# Transportation

Transportation is a related service under IDEA, and your child’s eligibility is determined by the IEP team based on criteria provided by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Transportation is provided by the OSSE Division of Transportation (DOT).

If you have questions about your child’s eligibility for transportation, please contact your child’s school.

If your child is eligible for transportation and you have questions about the bus, routing or scheduling, please call the OSSE DOT Parent Resource Center at 202-576-5000.



# Academic Interventions & Programs

- **BURST:** BURST uses districtwide assessments to identify areas of need in reading and groups students appropriately. Instruction is tailored depending on the area of need to help students master phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and oral language.
- **Common Core State Standards:** These standards lay out what students should know and be able to do in kindergarten through 12th grade.
- **DCPS Scope and Sequence:** DCPS Scope and Sequence standardizes instruction throughout the district (in different grade levels and subject areas) by providing clear guidance on what teachers should teach and when they should teach it.
- **Edmark:** This program is for students who need an alternative approach to phonics instruction. It follows a series of carefully sequenced and repetitive lessons that teaches sight-words and content-specific words up to a 3rd grade level.
- **Equals Math:** Designed for students with disabilities, this math program teaches various levels of math skills such as pre-readiness, fundamental and higher order math skills. Each lesson allows students of all levels to access mathematical concepts.
- **Failure Free Reading:** Failure Free Reading is a highly structured language development program that directly teaches reading comprehension, vocabulary and fluency. The content is designed for older students’ interests and aligned to their instructional reading levels.





- **Foundations:** Foundations lessons focus on carefully sequenced skills that include print knowledge; alphabet, phonological and phonemic awareness; decoding; vocabulary; fluency; and spelling. Critical thinking, speaking and listening skills are practiced during storytime activities.
- **Handwriting Without Tears:** This program is used to enhance fine-motor development. The program contains elements of multisensory activities that help students develop handwriting and letter formation skills.
- **Just Words:** Just Words is a multisensory decoding and spelling program for students in grades 4–12.
- **Lexia:** This literacy intervention creates an individualized learning path for each student and adapts instruction according to his or her responses. Although the primary focus of this software is developing students’ phonological awareness, all areas of reading are addressed.
- **Lindamood-Bell:** This reading program is made up of two sections: *Seeing Stars* and *Visualizing and Verbalizing*. The *Seeing Stars* section develops symbol imagery and the ability to visualize the sounds and letters in words. The *Visualizing and Verbalizing* section develops word imagery for oral and written language.
- **Reading Wonders:** Reading Wonders provides support for building a strong reading foundation directly aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The program uses reading and writing workshops and resources covering a wide range of reading levels to address all student needs. Reading Wonders also uses technology through multimedia activities and interactive games.
- **SpellRead:** This program provides multisensory instruction involving the manipulation and practice of letters and their corresponding sounds; these foundations are then used in reading and writing.
- **STAR Autism:** This program provides literacy teaching materials that follow ABA methods. The program also includes speech therapy instruction that develops oral language and teaches pre-requisite skills for reading.
- **System 44/Read 180:** *Read 180 Next Generation* is a program that helps students improve in all areas of literacy (reading comprehension, fluency and written expression). The *System 44 Next Generation* program helps students master the foundational reading skills (phonics, comprehension and writing). Both programs are computer based and aligned to the Common Core State Standards.



# Office of Specialized Instruction Contact Information

Office of Specialized Instruction  
Inclusive Programming Division  
1200 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
202-442-4800  
osi.programming@dc.gov

**Behavior & Education Support Program**  
osi.behavior@dc.gov

**Communication & Education Support Program**  
osi.autism@dc.gov

**Early Learning Support Program**  
osi.sls@dc.gov

**Independence & Learning Support Program**  
osi.lowincidence@dc.gov

**Medical & Education Support Program**  
osi.mes@dc.gov

**Sensory Support Program**  
osi.lowincidence@dc.gov

**Specific Learning Support Program**  
osi.sls@dc.gov

**Assistive Technology**  
osi.at@dc.gov

**Early Childhood Inclusion Classrooms**  
osi.earlychildhood@dc.gov

**Early Stages**  
info@earlystagesdc.gov

**Extended School Year**  
osi.esy@dc.gov

**Home and Hospital Instruction Program**  
hip.dcps@dc.gov

**Inclusion Models**  
osi.sit@dc.gov

**Related Services**  
dcps.relatedservices@dc.gov

**Section 504**  
504@dc.gov

**Transition Programs**  
osi.transition@dc.gov

**OSSE Department of Transportation Parent Resource Center**  
202-576-5000







DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1200 First Street, NE

Washington, DC 20002

[www.dcps.dc.gov](http://www.dcps.dc.gov)